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Letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith the statement by the Government of Sierra Leone on the rescue of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeepers in Kailahun, Eastern Region (see annex).

I should be grateful if the statement could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim M. **Kamara**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Government of Sierra Leone of 17 July 2000

The Government wishes to express its pleasure and satisfaction at the successful rescue of the United Nations peacekeepers and observers whose movements were restricted by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Kailahun for several weeks. The Government is particularly pleased to note that the rescue effort was carried out with admirable military precision, resulting in only a small number of peacekeepers sustaining relatively minor injuries, with no loss of life.

The Government therefore congratulates the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and all the troops that took part in the operation for a job very well done. While congratulating the peacekeepers and observers that were the victims of the hostage situation for their courage and professionalism throughout the ordeal, the Government wishes to assure them that all peace-loving Sierra Leoneans empathized with them and have breathed a sigh of relief now that they have regained their freedom.

The Government would also like to state that if fully understands UNAMSIL's prior restraint in the pursuit of sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. It is hoped that, after the events of the last few weeks, RUF will no longer regard this restraint as weakness and will stop challenging the resolve of both the Government of Sierra Leone and the entire international community to bring peace to our devastated country.

The Government therefore repeats its call to all those members of RUF who wish to give peace a chance to report at disarmament centres currently manned by UNAMSIL and hand in their weapons. All those who hand in their weapons will be treated well and will get the full benefits of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.